To our children and grandchildren this sketch is lovingly dedicated by the author.

Eva McPherson

Foreword:

Inasmuch as the district now commonly called "Stony Plain" was originally named after the Stoney Indians, in this sketch I have adhered to the spelling used to designate the noble red man rather than the word, "Stony", which suggests a rocky and barren tract of land.

Author.

MCPHERSON OF STONEY PLAIN.

To the west and far north of Scotland in the Outer Hebrides there lies the Island of North Uist. On the west side of this island is situated a district known as Houghgarry. It looks out upon a bleak bay across which can be seen a reef of angry breakers. In the distance one can discern the form of the Island of Heiskar famed as a resting place for seal and wild birds.

Along the shore of this uninviting bay one wild November night in the year of our Lord Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-two, there plodded a silent weary crofter. His whole mien was one of dejection. Often he looked away to the ~~east~~ west, across the bay and over the Atlantic toward America.

Upon entering his shieling or stone hut he was met by a cloud of smoke emanating from a rude open fireplace. Through it he could discern the form of his hard working wife. As she prepared their too scanty meal she crooned a Gaelic lullaby to the younger children.

"Well Catherine" he replied in response to her greeting of forced cheerfulness, "As I came along the seaside tonight I did some thinking. Why should a man toil incessantly for rude shelter and frugal fare such as we have here and never be allowed to own a foot of the ground on which he has labored when beyond yon ocean is a land of promise? What say, woman, to our getting ready to sail for America in the spring?"

To this the wife answered, "Ihave often heard my father say that twelve generations of Maclellans have lived on the croft at Balemore yet cannot call a foot of it their own and are allowed to raise only a limited number of cattle and sheep. So what is there here for our bairns to look forward to when they grow up? Little more than toil and relative serfdom. If you, my husband, think America is the land for us then I am with you heart and soul."

Donald Macpherson for such was the name of the crofter about whom we have been writing found that his brother Neil and his brother-in-law Alex Macaulay were anxious to accompany him and his family to the world across the Atlantic. Their plans for their leaving for America in the early spring as soon as weather would permit, were set in motion.

Donald's family consisted of two comely daughters and three wiry looking sons. They had to travel to the mainland in open comfortless boats on which humans and cattle shared the same type of accommodation.

At Glasgow they embarked on an old sailing ship and after a long, tedious voyage, fraught with much hardship, arrived at an eastern Canadian port. Hence they made their way to Brant County, Ontario and settled at Mount Pleasant. At this place there was born to them on December twenty-eighth in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-five their youngest child, a son. He was duly christened John Allan after his mother's brother, John Allan Maclellan of Balemore in the Island of North Mist.

It is with this the youngest son of the family that this story is concerned.

When he was about six years of age his parents moved to the County of North Ontario and located on a small farm near the village of Atherly not far from Orillia.

Here he was enrolled in the school at Uptergrove. During the first day of his attendance there an inefficient teacher, male, and rebellious pupils created a scene of violence that left a terrifying impression on the mind of the young child. This state of affairs, however, did not long endure. A school master of more than ordinary parts who hailed from Ireland was given the responsibility of training the youth of the district. His name was Mr. Byrne.

The lad became a great admirer of this man who adorned the profession of the pedagogue and he listened enthralled as Mr. Byrne, reciting with great gusto the works of the poets and authors of his day, proceeded up and down the aisles of the school room. The teacher was past middle life and as the infirmities of age later on overtook him the boy with loving care ministered to his needs. Then the time came when the rude school house walls no longer echoed to the ringing tones of the master's voice as he declaimed the classics. He was laid to rest while the pupils whom he had inspired looked on in sorrow.

In appreciation of the services rendered him by the young McPherson the beloved teacher bequeathed him his watch. This watch the lad treasured until he too became an old man.

Shortly after the beginning of his school career the hero of this tale suffered an irreparable loss in the death by fire of his mother.

On a summer day which was destined to be her last she had been raking up and burning chips which lay so thickly strewn about the yard as a result of the felling of the great trees which was necessary if the early settler was to provide himself a home. Her clothing had ignited and in the absence of members of the family the flame was not extinguished until she had sustained fatal injuries. At bed time the family found her in a dying condition. After embracing her youngest child

with her fire scarred arms she bade the remaining members of her family a tender farewell and passed on to enjoy the reward of work well done.

Upon the young shoulders of her daughter Kate devolved the task of carrying on the home and mothering the younger children. This duty she performed faithfully and well.

As John McPherson approached his later teens the necessity for earning some money was forced upon him. By this time, being a versatile youth, he worked at various jobs. These included clerking in a small country store and post office, river-driving, a hazardous occupation at best and for one of his slender build peculiarly so, and steamboating on Georgian Bay and Lake Huron. This work on the lake was too heavy for him and the officers under whom he served both tyrannical and inconsiderate. It was good for his future welfare that at this time his experience included some farm work.

When he was in his nineteenth year Death again struck at his family in the shape of the dreaded disease, smallpox, and carried off his father and his brother Hugh. As a result the home was broken up.

So far we have written perhaps rather much of the sombre side of the life of the McPherson family. To think that ther was no lighter side to their existence would be a mistake.

One of the childhood treats brought to Johnnie, as he was sometimes called, was a large striped red and white candy cane. For a long time the recipient of this delectable gift was content to gaze upon and gloat over it. However one day he decided that candy was meant for eating and so began the first inroad into the beautiful confection. Needless to say in the course of time the cane disappeared from view but it left behind a sweet memory that lingered in the mind of its one time owner throughout the span of his long life.

To delight the boys of the neighbourhood there was bathing in Lake Simcoe and the subject of this sketch boasted that on one memorable day he had been in the lake twenty-five times.

Later as the children became youths and maidens there were country dances to attend. Here Irish and Scotch regardless of creed or country intermingled in an abandonment of good health and merriment such as is the right of the young in every land and era to enjoy. In the art of violin accompaniment and of calling off at these "square" dances as they were then known, Roger McPherson and his brother-in-law, young Sayles, were past masters. They could even call off, "fiddle" and dance all at the same time.

The dance was often Le Grande Finale of a day spent by the men at a "bee" for barn raising, land clearing or some other difficult piece of work and by the women in quilting. Had it not been for these barn raisings and quilting bees social life in rural communities of early Canada would have been poor indeed.

In the year 1873 Manitoba and the Red River settlement were much in the public mind. Young McPherson felt the call and decided to adventure into the west. A broken romance, also, had something to do with his making the decision.

Accordingly, one morning during the first week of April Roger McPherson, his wife Margaret, and sister Kate were drawn up in solemn array to bid God speed to the younger brother setting out for the then comparatively unknown land of the great North West. It was with full hearts and many misgivings that they watched the youth set out. They had given him much good advice and finally commending him to the God of those that "seek a country" they turned again to their daily routine.

Thrown thus upon his own resources the young man secured transportation from Collingwood on Georgian Bay to Duluth, Minnesota, on Lake Superior. Then he entrained for Glyndon and Fisher's landing on the Red River. At the latter point he embarked on the Red River steamer "International". On April seventeenth he arrived at Winnipeg.

Finding that the prospects for work in that city were gloomy he set out on the following day to find work on the Canadian Pacific Railway due east. After travelling on foot four days, carrying a bag containing part of his clothing and in this manner covering one hundred miles, he found a job with a Mr. Armstrong, a civil engineer. At his duties to this man included valet service the term of employment was short and came to an abrupt end.

During the summer he at times experienced loneliness and late in August wrote his brother Roger that he had met only one man whom he had formerly known and that was a James Barr.

He spent about three years on this work east of Winnipeg. The employment varied. At one time he was cook's assistant. Two years he spent in guarding a boat riding at anchor on the Lake of the Woods.

It was during this period that the citizens of the prairie city turned out to witness a strange sight. This was the running of the first train from St. Boniface to Winnipeg. It was brought over on the ice. Shortly after this a pile bridge was built over which the trains rolled into the city. Later this was replaced by the Louise Bridge.

McPHERSON OF STONEY PLAIN

Ever since leaving Ontario young McPherson had experienced an intense longing to see more of the prairie farm lands of the great North West. In the spring of 1881 he had the opportunity of gratifying this desire. In a letter to his brother Roger he explains his plans. We cannot do better at this point than to insert a fac simile of the letter.

Winnipeg, Sunday, May 15/81.

Dear Brother,

I suppose you have been patiently waiting to hear from me indeed I have been anxious to hear from you. Owing to the way I have been situated I could not well help the delay in writing.

For some time past I have been busy running around through the town and country buying some oxen. Now that I have about finished that business I will explain what I intend doing with oxen.

I have taken a contract for hauling some freight across the prairie from here to Fort Edmonton, a distance of about nine hundred miles. I shall receive nine and a half cents per pound and shall have a splendid opportunity for seeing a large tract of prairie country. With reasonable luck I think the trip will benefit me considerably.

I have one span of horses, harness and wagon sound and new which I am going to take through on speculation. There are also sixteen oxen with new harness and carts and each animal presumably will haul ten hundred pounds. The trip is expected to take two months or over. I intend leaving here on Wednesday, May 18th. The roads are drying up nicely and grass is growing splendidly. These are the two most favorable factors looked for on a trip of this kind.

Were I to represent this equipment as being exclusively my own you would know that I was telling an untruth. In the venture I am merely a partner with another man who was over the road last season.

The answer to this somewhat confused letter you may address to Fort Edmonton, N.W.T. as I expect that is where I shall next call for mail. It will be there ahead of me. Please give me all the news you can.

Give my best respects to the McLean family. With kindest regards to Margaret, the children and yourself,

I remain,

Your affectionate brother,

John A. McPherson.

The carts to which McPherson referred were Red River carts and were an integral part of the early Manitoba Settler's equipment. They were made entirely of wood.. When in motion their creaking as described by Roderick Campbell, author of "The Father of St. Hilda" was "unearthly, weird and horrible".

As the party was leaving Winnipeg the members were advised by citizens of that city to hurry in order to reach Edmonton before the railway. In this respect as McPherson later remarked they succeeded beautifully as the railway did not get to Edmonton until the early nineties.

The trip was long, tiresome and fraught with many delays. At best oxen furnished but a slow means of transportation and the trail being very poor, the slow advance was almost unendurable. Often a day's travel would fail to take them out of sight of the point from which they had set out in the morning. They travelled by way of Portage La Prairie, Shoal Lake, Birtle, Qu'Appelle, Humbolt, Battleford, Lloydminster, Beaver Hills, South Edmonton, then across the Saskatchewan River by John Walter's cable ferry to the town of Edmonton. At that time Edmonton had a population of only a few hundred. The journey had occupied fifteen weeks instead of the ten they had anticipated.

It was considered necessary to assign a driver to every four oxen. The complete party consisted of Fred Calder, who had been outfitted by his father, an implement dealer of Winnipeg, and was on his own though in the ox train; Dan McLeod, George McManus, Archie Reid, a half breed guide named Moise and the two partners, Madill and McPherson.

The freight was duly delivered to Mr. John A. McDougall pioneer merchant of Edmonton, to whom it had been assigned.

En route they had fallen in with a number of intending settlers and after reaching Edmonton they met still others. These included Dan Maloney, H. Bannerman, Scott Robertson, John Cameron, Hugh McKay, D.S. McKay, George Blake, the McKinley brothers, W. Craig, George Long, Harry Long, Bob Holmes and brother, Alex McNabb, Jack Madden George Sutherland, Jack Ferguson, W. Keith, Alf and Thomas Hutchings.

As fall and winter were approaching McPherson shrank from returning to Winnipeg over the long and difficult trail. Mr. Madill, however, was bent on going back so the two dissolved partnership.

John McPherson decided to look around with a view to selecting a suitable spot in which to make a home for himself. He chose a fertile district west of Edmonton, over which large bands of Stoney Indians had been wont to roam and which for that reason was called Stoney Plain.

During the quest he met Alex McNabb who was on a similar mission. Upon further acquaintance the two men chose adjoining sections of land and entered upon a pact to help each other. Sometimes one alone could do the necessary land improvements while the other went out to earn some much needed money. This partnership was designed as a means of mutual aid to last only until each was somewhat firmly established on his own land and in a home of his own.

Immediately after making this arrangement the young men set about the task of building a shack or cabin for themselves and a stable for their three head of oxen. Before this could be done, however, they had to provide sleighs on which to haul the logs from the bush. For the sleighs they chose suitable birch both for superstructure and runners. Then with some band iron which they happened to possess they shod the runners.

Years later in speaking of this first attempt at home-making in the west, Mr. McPherson said, "We even included a chimney or fireplace made of clay in the form of bricks. The only bit of sawn lumber," he continues, "consisted of a few pieces of board sufficient for a door and a couple of small windows."

They had chosen their land before a survey was made. The following year surveyors entered the district and planted a quarter section post in the centre of the fifteen acre field that the two young farmers had cleared. This meant that the land comprised in the field lay in four different quarter sections. By later making some changes in their original selections the matter was satisfactorily adjusted.

From this time on they broke and cropped more land every year until each had a respectable sized farm. Their first crop of grain they threshed with a flail. The second was trodden out with cayuses or Indian ponies loaned to them by their neighbour, Mr. James Gibbons. By the latter method which obviously could be employed only in cold weather a floor of ice was made in a nearby field and enclosed by rails and pickets. Then bundles of grain were placed around the inside edge of the enclosure and the centre left free. Next the cayuses, eight or ten in number were driven upon the icy floor and kept in motion while the straw was turned over at frequent intervals. For this forks were used.

When the straw was separated from the grain and chaff, the ponies were temporarily removed, the grain and chaff shoved to the centre, more bundles laid and the operation repeated. After the bundles had all been disposed of there remained the task of freeing the grain. This was done by a primitive but effective method of winnowing.

In those early days their hay was mown with a scythe. It and their grain were hauled by ox and cart. In 1884 they were happily enabled to add a team of horses and second hand wagon to their equipment. With increased settlement and acreage under cultivation the owner of a steam threshing outfit in a nearby district was induced to thresh for them and their neighbours.

A perusal of some of the letters written by John McPherson to his brother Roger in Ontario gives us an idea of the ups and downs of the pioneers of those early years.

In November of 1884 he tells his brother that promising crops were so badly injured by frost that they cut but half of them and that was very poor. He is busy building a stable whose dimensions are 25 by 50 feet. As lumber and shingles are so expensive, they are roofing this structure by building a stack of hay on top of it. This type of roof, while of course only temporary, has been proven to be very warm. While not wishing his brother to inconvenience himself by sending money he tells him that should he have wool on hand he would very much appreciate some warm home-made underclothing, mits and socks. Articles of that kind in Edmonton are poor in quality and high in price.

A letter written in February 1885 reports a cold winter and hard times. It also states that he is hauling rails for a fence and timber for a house and stable to be built the following summer.

In the following July the partners McNabb and McPherson were working on the proposed house when a band of Indians appeared and in no uncertain manner demanded food. As the two men had been living in the McNabb quarters the food was there. McPherson immediately set out with the Indians to obtain for them the desired provisions. A young brave menacingly flourished a knife in his direction but returned it to his belt when rebuked by the chief.

This incident clearly indicated to the two white men that all was not harmonious in the relations between the Reds and the palefaces. They did not however fully comprehend the gravity of the situation.

Edmonton was fifteen miles away and it was decided that McPherson should take a trip to town to get up to date information regarding the trouble. He was approaching the town one night just at dusk when he was challenged by a sentry who didn't recognise that he was white. Not knowing the password or that one was necessary he had a difficult moment or so. The guard though, soon grasped the circumstances and the embarrassing situation was promptly ended.

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS

A letter to his brother at this time is rather enlightening so we shall reproduce it here.

Edmonton, Alberta. July 8th, 1885.

Dear Brother and all,

No doubt you have read all about the rebellion and Indian rising in any and all Ontario papers. At least I have seen a great deal written about it in eastern papers. Although here situated close to the scene of action we read of more war news coming from the eastern Canadian papers. But now thank God the war is about at an end for the present.

I could not begin to give you the particulars of it and as I said before you know as much about it as I do. One thing I must say and that is that the government is to be praised for its speedy suppression. Had it not been for the prompt arrival of troops here I do believe that every white settler would have been massacred.

Before the arrival of the armed force all mail and telegraph communication was completely cut off. Nearly all the Indians were on the warpath pillaging and plundering whatever came in their way in the shape of provisions, horses and cattle. In the meantime nearly all the settlers of the district fled from their homes and took up quarters in Edmonton. They repaired a stockade on the Hudson's Bay Company's grounds and supplied themselves with arms and ammunition as best they could. Then inside this fortification men, women and children huddled together. They waited and watched day and night for the expected attack. But fortunately the soldiers from the east arrived before the Indians seemed prepared for the onslaught.

The sight of the red-coats scattered them immediately. It was later learned that they had been waiting to learn how Riel and his followers were progressing with their fight. Had Riel gained a victory at the Battle of Batoche, without a doubt the Indians would have swept all of us away. But General Middleton having won that encounter and taken Riel prisoner they lost all courage. A great many of them threw down their arms and surrendered to the General.

Chief Big Bear and his band who have committed several depredations in the Edmonton and Fort Pitt districts, at last accounts were still at large. The troops were about giving up the chase as they found it impossible to follow him through such rough country. Now as order is once more restored we anticipate no serious trouble from him.

This rebellion has been a great drawback to this country this season as it has hindered farming operations to a considerable extent. The season so far has been all that could be

wished for and what crops were put in in due time are looking magnificently grand.

I have just commenced haying which will occupy all my time until harvesting comes on. I have also put up a good, substantial, hewn log house 18 x 24 feet inside. This fall I will build a good stable and pig pen. So you see this season will have been a busy one with me and likely a hard one.

Hoping to hear from you soon,

I remain,

Yours affectionately,

John A. McPherson.

Later this year the young farmer, as the result of a prairie fire, sustained a heavy loss. Included in what was burned were hay, oats and a number of fence rails. As a result he had to buy hay at a high price. Other settlers had lost everything in the holocaust of wind and flame. By this time he was able to muster a four horse team.

On June 21st, 1886 he writes his brother that seeding, after being half done, was delayed by a snowstorm which visited them on April 30th and remained three days. Cold weather further prevented seeding operations for twelve days. Fine weather succeeded and under the circumstances the crops did well. Samples of wheat sent him by his nephew, Dan McLean, having been in the earlier sowing were remarkable progress. He then states that he hopes either his brother or his nephew will send him a sample of good, hardy fall wheat.

Later in the year a letter to his brother gives rather a vivid picture of conditions then existing. We shall copy it for the benefit of present day readers.

Edmonton, Alberta, N.W.T. Nov. 14th/86.

Dear Brother and All,

This being a fine, quiet and idle evening with me I shall pass myself by writing you again. The weather, quite in accordance with the whole season past, is exceptionally fine. The ground is only slightly frozen but enough to stop the plough for the past week. There are no immediate signs of snow.

Some weeks ago I had my crop threshed and am fairly satisfied with the yield. It totalled a thousand bushels made up as follows, wheat 140 bushels, oats 250 bushels, barley 610 bushels. In addition to the grain I have 250 bushels of potatoes

and fifty of turnips. These latter owing to having been eaten down by grubs in late June and early July were almost a failure. I have hay enough for my own use. Prices for farm produce are about as follows, wheat, no sale at all at any price, greater part of last year's yield still on hand; oats 60¢ per bushel, barley 80¢ per bushel and can be sold only in small lots, potatoes no demand at all as everyone had an unusually large crop.

Vegetables this year are frequently of an unusually large size. I have seen several potatoes that weighed from 3½ to 4 lbs., turnips that weighed from 30 to 40 lbs. each and cabbage heads that weighed 45 lbs. each.

The crop throughout this district is the best I have yet seen. The yield per acre is somewhat lighter than last year but the sample is first class in every particular. The want of market is a serious drawback. I had thought of selling all my grain this fall and investing the proceeds in sheep which would be a quite profitable venture. However with prices what they are I shall have to postpone the sheep business and hope for better grain markets next spring and summer. In the meantime I shall strive to overcome present difficulties as best I may.

This year I got twenty acres of fall ploughing done which is more than I ever had before. I have been able to put things in general in pretty fair shape for winter. Before spring I hope to get about 5000 rails out.

The parcel of socks and mits I received all right and many thanks for them.

With best wishes for you all and hoping to hear from you again soon, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

John A. McPherson

Still another letter written January 9th, 1887 informs his brother that business and trade remain very dull. There is no market for farm produce and little or no work. He would like to buy cows. These are worth seventy-five and eighty dollars per head while yearling heifers are worth from twenty to twenty-five each. A bank of two thousand sheep had been brought in from the Northern States and were selling at five dollars per head where the price had formerly been twelve dollars. Where possible all farmers, who had not heretofore owned sheep, bought of this lot.

REPRESENTATION OF SPRUCE HILLS

Dominion elections are in the offing and it is stated that the North West Territories are to have representation. It is to be hoped that conditions will change for the better. Complaints that in getting supplies for the Indians the government overlooks buying from the home merchants or the settlers.

In a letter written on August 15th, 1887 John McPherson advises his brother that frost has rendered two-thirds of his crop worthless. He still has some of the previous year's grain which would bring a good price if he could hold it until the following spring. But he has a payment to make early in October and unless he can obtain the required money in some other way he will be forced to sell his grain at the low fall price.

As time rolled "his ceaseless course" new settlers came into the district at first singly and later in groups. Among the former were Mr. Robert Grebner from Edinburgh, Mr. Gideon Lacerte from the Province of Quebec, the Mennonites and the Germans. Among those who came in groups were twenty-five families of Austrians who had spent a short time at Dunmore and Medicine Hat also a number of Pennsylvania Dutch families from the County of Waterloo, Ontario.

In the early eighties the first post office had been established on the McPherson farm and at the suggestion of Mr. McPherson in consultation with Mr. Grant, Eye had been named Spruce Grove. The former gentleman was chosen first post master.

With increased settlement the need for schools was felt. In 1893 the first school district west of Edmonton was organized and known as School District No. 522 of the North West Territories. In quick succession other district were organized in neighbouring sections.

Churches soon followed and among these Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic were represented. The work among the Protestant denominations was carried on by a fine type of young men who were usually students and who worked together without friction. The visits of the priest were welcomed by Protestant and Roman Catholic and in later years one, especially, Father Lessier became a much loved figure.

A crying need for better roads was felt. This resulted in the organization of Local Improvement Districts throughout various sections of the community. These efforts bore good results.

Some time previously by mutual consent the partnership between McPherson and McNabb had been dissolved. In 1893 the latter married Christina, daughter of George Model of Spruce Grove. The following year Mr. McNabb died leaving an infant daughter, Annie. In 1894 Mr. McPherson married his erstwhile partner's widow, Mrs. McNabb.

Now in 1895, seventeen years after he had left his old home in Ontario on the memorable April morning, he returned for a short visit. He was quite disappointed to find that many of his former friends were not there and that conditions had changed so much. However while there he purchased a small herd of short horn cattle which he brought back to the west with him and placed upon his farm. This proved a very successful venture and in course of time he acquired some fame as a short horn breeder. It also led to his becoming interested both as an exhibitor and a director in the Edmonton Agricultural Exhibition.

Through the years he was able to raise a splendid type of wheat and as a result placed on the market an excellent brand of seed which was in great demand and paid good dividends. He contended and proved that mixed farming was the kind best adapted to the section of Alberta in which he lived. Should the farmer who raised stock have the misfortune to produce a poor crop of grain, it would not be a total loss if he could feed it to his cattle or swine.

Through the good offices of his friend, the Honourable Frank Oliver, Minister of Interior for the Dominion of Canada, Mr. McPherson was appointed a farmer delegate to Scotland in 1904. His work was to visit numerous agricultural sections in that country and to thus interest a good class of farmers in emigrating to Alberta. In this respect he achieved a fair amount of success.

In 1905 provincial autonomy was granted to Alberta and Saskatchewan. Hitherto they had been known as North West Territories. Now each would be able to elect its own legislative assembly. An election was held on November ninth of that year. Mr. McPherson allowed his name to be placed in nomination as a Liberal candidate for Stoney Plain constituency. He was duly chosen as such and on election day became a member of the first legislative assembly for the province of Alberta. This body consisted of twenty-five members.

These original members of the Alberta Legislature were a very fine type of men and highly representative of the various sections of the province. Many of them were pioneers and each knew his constituency well.

Mr. W.F. Bredin (Athabasca) had explored much of the Mackenzie Basin, the Peace River District and the Athabasca country. Hon. Mr. Thos. Finlay (Medicine Hat) first Minister of Agriculture and with former legislative experience, had preceded the railway to Medicine Hat and arrived there in 1883. Mr. H.S. Mahony (St. Albert) genial narrator of many a thrilling adventure of early Minnesota days, had passed through Edmonton in 1875. Mr. Malcolm Mackenzie (Macleod) was an able parliamentarian and a man of singular honour. Mr. John Simpson

(Innisfail) had seen three terms in the old North West Territorial House.

The legislature was led by the Honourable Mr. A.C. Rutherford (Strathcona) as Premier and his brilliant colleague, Mr. C.W. Cross (Edmonton) as Attorney General.

By the second general election held on March 22, 1909, Mr. McPherson was returned to represent the constituency of Stoney Plain. Provincial representation had been raised from twenty-five to forty-one members and in this way considerable new blood was infused into the Provincial Parliamentary body.

In August, 1909 Mr. McPherson suffered a great bereavement in the passing of his wife Christina after a long and painful illness. Besides her husband she was survived by seven infant children. These were, Annie the child of her first marriage, John, George, Angus R., James A., Charles R., and Margaret E.M.

Later in the year he with his fellow members of Parliament witnessed Earl Grey, then Governor-in-General of Canada, in the presence of a vast concourse of people, lay the corner stone of the present Parliament Buildings of Alberta. Up till now the legislature and offices had been inadequately housed.

Early in 1910 he took a trip to the Coast. On his return he hurried into Edmonton to take part in the strenuous session which opened in February.

In August of the same year Mr. McPherson married Eva Mabel Watson, daughter of a pioneer Eastern Canadian journalistic family.

In the general election of 1913, he was defeated. Since autonomy had been granted Alberta much had been accomplished in the province, including the building of railways, roads and telephone lines, the opening up of school districts and the establishment of demonstration farms. Mr. McPherson was able in his quiet way to secure for his constituency a large portion of this development. He viewed with pardonable pride the success of the Liberal government in the discharge of the responsibilities undertaken by its ministers and members.

His services to the province were recognised by his appointment on September 1st, 1914 as sheriff of the newly created district of Red Deer.

Upon leaving Spruce Grove to live in Red Deer Mr. McPherson summed up this upheaval in his life in the following words, "I had resided on the farm at Spruce Grove in all

nearly thirty three years and had seen many ups and downs in that time as most pioneers do see. Like those pioneers, though, I reflect that without these experiences my life would have been bare and incomplete."

He lived in Red Deer for eight years at the end of which period he retired. While there his three youngest children were born. Those of school age were taught in excellent schools and the citizens generally treated him and his family kindly. He in turn tried to carry a fair share of civic responsibility.

He became a director of the Red Deer Exhibition and served on the board with considerable zest. In Knox Presbyterian Church, which was then under the charge of the dynamic Rev. W.D. Brown, he held office.

While in Red Deer he suffered a great sorrow in the death in action at Passchendaele of his eldest son, John. This was followed by the passing of his second son, George, who at the time was serving overseas with the 1st C.M.R. George however, recovered to a considerable extent.

Upon retiring from the civil service in Alberta, Mr. McPherson decided to seek a home in a milder climate. With that object in view he and his wife took a trip through British Columbia. After carefully looking about they decided to settle on a small holding at Port Hammond. They then returned to Red Deer for their family and merchandise. By this time the older members of the family had grown up and were away from home. Only the five youngest were left.

Nearly four years were spent at Port Hammond after which the family moved to Vancouver.

During the years spent in this city Mr. McPherson took part in various activities, attended to his private business matters and enjoyed looking after his flowers. He delighted in meeting former Edmonton and Red Deer friends who for various reasons had come to reside at the Coast.

Among those were Mr. Charles May, one time mayor of Edmonton, Mr. K.A. McLeod who had reached that city during the year that Mr. McPherson himself had arrived there, Mr. James Ross whom he had known in the Alberta Legislature, Mr. Malcolm of Red Deer and many others.

For some years he had cherished a longing to see the Island of North Uist, in Scotland, from which his parents had emigrated. He also wished to see the battlefield on which his son John had made the supreme sacrifice in 1917.

McPHERSON OF STONEY PLAIN

The Vimy Pilgrimage of 1936 A.D. presented the means of gratifying this two fold desire. On July 12th, 1936, he and his wife in company with hundreds of other pilgrims set out from Vancouver to witness the unveiling of the great Vimy memorial on Vimy Ridge in France. This stupendous event was to take place on July 26th.

Five days later he embarked on the Steamer, Montcalm, at Montreal and on July 25th landed at Antwerp, Belgium. In company with other pilgrims he entrained for Lille, France. From this point they were driven in motor buses to the grave yards of World War I.

At Ypres he found his son's name on the Menin Gate among the names of 56,000 British soldiers listed as "missing". The boy had been a member of the 46th regiment. R.E. Melbourne the son of an old Winterburn (Alberta) neighbor was also "Missing" from the same regiment. It was appalling to think that of 56,000 of the British Empire's best only these names on the Menin Gate remained.

In company with many other pilgrims Mr. McPherson visited Berks cemetery in which were buried 11,700 British. They learned that as a result of World War I, the Empire had 1200 such graveyards in France and Belgium.

At the appointed time on Sunday July 26th accompanied by the President of France, Monsieur Le Brun, King Edward VIII of England in the presence of a great multitude of people unveiled the statue which represented Canada weeping over her dead. The fact that the ruler of all the British was behind them thus showing that Canada had the backing of a great Empire gave the Canadian pilgrims a splendid sense of security.

Throughout the ceremony a certain amount of gloom rested on the brow of Mr. McPherson as with a flash of Highland second sight he seemed to realize that in the near future England and France would be called upon to fight another and more deadly war.

The following day the pilgrims embarked for London. They attended various functions there including the laying of a wreath on the cenotaph and a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

On August 1st they re-entered France this time as guests of the French government. While there they were shown the sights of Paris, given a great banquet at Le Place Des Invalides treated to a tour of the Gardens and Palace of Versailles and taken on excursions to Amboise, Blois and Rouen. They returned to London on August 5th and the Vimy Pilgrimage was officially ended.

Although by this time Mr. McPherson was eighty years of age he thoroughly appreciated all he had seen. His picture appeared in the London Daily Sketch of July 27th and wherever he went he seemed a favorite.

Now that the pilgrimage had ended he and his wife decided to spend a month in touring the British Islands. This was to include a trip to North Uist.

Some time previously he had joined the Clan Chattan organization of which Mr. Macpherson Grant of Ascot Gate, Ascot, England was honorary secretary. This gentleman very kindly invited his overseas clansman down to Ascot for a day and upon the invitation's being accepted entertained him in most hospitable and interesting manner. The entertainment included a drive through Great Windsor Park with a view of Fort Belvedere and Royal Lodge also a visit to Eton College and Windsor Castle.

A two day bus trip from London to Edinburgh with an all night stopover in the walled city of Chester gave Mr. McPherson a great deal of enjoyment.

Finally he found himself on the Island of North Uist, the home of his ancestors. Here he was entertained by a kinswoman Mrs. Neil Ferguson of Carinish. Her brother Mr. McLean kindly took him in hand and drove him to meet various relatives. These included his first cousin, Mr. Donald Maclellan and family of Balemore, Mr. Ewan Macpherson, Mr. Macpherson's son A.J. who had lost an arm in World War I at the Battle of Arras, and Mr. E. Macpherson's daughter Mrs. Fraser.

The tour of the Island was concluded by Mr. McLean's driving him to see the old croft at Houghgarry from which his father Donald Macpherson had emigrated in the early fifties of the preceding century.

Returning to Glasgow John McPherson spent a few days in that city and its environs and on August 31st left for Ardrossan. Thence he embarked for Belfast.

While in Belfast through the kindness of Mrs. Wm. Hood of Vancouver, he was enabled to meet her sister Mrs. Hyndman mistress of the manse at Belmont and her husband the Rev. Mr. Hyndman. They entertained him at their home and otherwise showered hospitality on him and his wife.

On September 5th the McPhersons sailed from Belfast on the ill fated ship Athenia and landed in Montreal nine days later.

While in that port Mr. McPherson enjoyed meeting his wife's cousin, Dr. W.J. Kerr a native of the city. He was driven by his son James through the fertile Eastern Townships of Quebec to Compton, birthplace of his wife.

In Ontario he paid a last visit to his beloved brother. Roger and Roger's son, Angus. Roger and John both felt that this was their final farewell.

In 1938 the esteemed traveller took one more trip. This time he journeyed to California to visit his son, Charles and daughter, Margaret. While enjoying meeting his children and their respective families and friends he found the trip a bit trying.

He then settled down in his home in Vancouver where each succeeding year, age continued to take a heavier toll of his strength.

As mid December of 1944 approached, one morning he suffered a violent attack of illness from which he failed to rally. For about a fortnight he gradually lost strength.

As he lay in ever weakening condition his mind travelled back through the years, to his days in the legislature, to his early struggles on the farm at Spruce Grove, to his long overland trip by Red River cart from Winnipeg in the early eighties, to the perils of his river-driving days, to his beloved school master Mr. Byrne eloquently declaiming verse, to bathing in Lake Simcoe and to his mother's Gaelic lullaby.

On December 26th, two days before his eighty-ninth birthday, he passed peacefully away. One of his last conscious acts had been to embrace and kiss his two grand children and on the older of these, Maureen, his later absence made a profound impression.

From near and far flocked his children to witness the last rites for their beloved parent. They included George from Edson, Alberta, Angus from Cranbrook, B.C., James from Ottawa, Jean from Calgary, Wallace from his air posting at Tofino, B.C., Catherine, Frances and Marion of Vancouver, his stepdaughter Annie from Edmonton, Alberta and her son Jack Blackwood from his air posting at Sea Island.

Tribute to this noble pioneer was paid by various sections of the press and we shall close with the last lines of an editorial which appeared in the Edmonton Journal of January 3rd, 1945.

McPHERSON OF STONEY PLAIN

"What the present generation and those that are to follow owe to men like Mr. McPherson, who laid the foundations of all the remarkable progress that has been witnessed since they established themselves in a remote section of the dominion and showed how productive it could be, cannot be over estimated."